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## APPENDIX C

REPORT OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF WAR,  
ADMIRAL WILLIAM F. HALSEY, JR. AND ADMIRAL THEODORE  
S. WILKINSON, FEBRUARY 20, 1945.

A little after 12 o'clock Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. accompanied by Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson called on the Secretary of War. Mr. McCloy was present.

The Admiral stated that Secretary Forrestal had asked that on his visit to Washington he communicate with the Secretary of War and give that Department the benefit of his thoughts on the matter of our security in the Pacific. At the outset Admiral Halsey said he felt from what he had seen of the Japanese too many of them were unregenerate and there was no hope of educating them to a decent life; that their religion and traditions were such that it was hopeless to suppose they would willingly conform to peaceful conditions in the Pacific, at least not within the next two or three generations. They would live under an abiding hatred for this country, which to their mind had merely interfered in the accomplishment of their just destiny. He said he thought it was necessary to establish ourselves in such a way as to compel the Japanese to conform in the hope that new generations would depart from the old ideas and carry on as desirable members of the community. He believed that

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we ought to think about the wisdom of applying a sort of extended armistice to them; that there should be no immediate peace - they should be compelled to live on probation until they satisfied everyone that they were prepared to operate on a decent basis. This would require, he said, the establishment of ourselves firmly on the islands of the Pacific close to Japan and elsewhere so that we could rapidly move in to deal with them whenever they acted up, without fear of being cut off.

At this point the Admiral brought up the question of what our future policy in China was to be. He spoke of the debate among the strategists on whether to go directly into Japan or land on the China coast. He expressed the view that it was perfectly feasible with our existing strength to land anywhere on the China coast that we saw fit. The Secretary of War referred to the paper he had received from the State Department on this subject (Appendix B).

The discussion then turned to the Japanese maintaining themselves on the continent after being cut off from the homeland. Admiral Halsey and Admiral Wilkinson expressed the view that it would be very difficult for them to maintain themselves on the continent. They questioned whether Manchukuo was sufficiently developed to support armies in the modern sense, once those armies

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were completely cut off from the islands.

Admiral Halsey said we should build up the Philippines till they became a sort of Great Britain of the Pacific, so far as we were concerned, and that strong naval and military bases should be established and maintained there. In this connection, Admiral Wilkinson said that the Navy were about ready to report what they wished in the Philippines in the way of bases. The importance of coming to a conclusion on this was pointed out by the Secretary of War as one could not tell how rapidly the independence of the Philippines would be established. The question was raised as to how far along the Army was in their determination of what they might need in the Philippines and it was determined that this matter should be followed up at once. This led to a discussion of the mandated islands and other areas in the Pacific which might be of importance to us. Halsey expressed it as his view that certainly all the Japanese islands above the Equator should be ours and he did not like the idea of trusteeships. Not only these islands but the Volcano, Bonin and other islands to the south of Japan should be occupied and the appropriate ones fortified. He said, however, these would not be sufficient for a well rounded security. There were islands south of the Equator of greater importance to us. Marcus Island, on which we had spent

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millions of dollars. was now a well running base and a strong effort should be made to maintain this base. It was developed at great expense and it protected our lower flank against any operations that we might conduct against Japan in the future, and from every point of view it was a highly desirable strategic point for us to maintain. He said we ought to be able to operate from our bases irrespective of the neutrality of the owner or former owner. He also spoke of the value of New Caledonia. He said the climate and harbors and the size of the islands made it ideal as a base, although its security value was not as immediately apparent as some of the islands to the north. The Admiral came back to the importance of Manus on several occasions, particularly as a protection to our flank in any future operations against Japan.

The need for a prompt and definite statement of our interests in the Pacific was emphasized both by Admiral Wilkison and Admiral Halsey and concurred in by the Secretary of War. The fact that the San Francisco Conference was coming on, which was to be preceded by a conference amongst the larger powers, at both of which meetings a discussion of "trusteeships" would take place, emphasized this need. It was determined that steps should be taken to stimulate the studies which General Mabick and Admiral Wilson and others were making so that the Services could come

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forward promptly with a statement of their position.

Admiral Halsey expressed the view that the Japanese fleet was pretty well done in; that landings could be effected in almost any area we chose and that in his judgment the Japanese would probably "break". He felt that as the military and naval figures became discredited, the industrialists might very well come forward with attractive peace terms. He strongly recommended that we should hold to an unconditional surrender position.

Both Admiral Halsey and Admiral Wilkinson emphasized that they were not speaking for the Navy in any sense but were simply coming in at the suggestion of the Secretary of the Navy to exchange ideas as individuals with the Secretary of War on our interests in the Pacific. The Secretary of War stated his great appreciation of their calling upon him and told them he was prepared to do his utmost to support the vital needs of the Navy as well as the Army in any opportunity which was afforded him in the determination of our policy.

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